

WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD NORTH COAST REGION

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

September 2000

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

WATERSHED DIVISION

TMDLs

(staff contact: Dave Evans)

The State Water Resources Control Board has scheduled a Workshop on September 6, 2000, to discuss the **Garcia River** TMDL and Implementation Plan. Regional Board staff will present the Letter of Support approved by the Board and signed by the Board Chairman. Staff will also address any questions that might come up. The State Board has scheduled a public hearing on September 21, 2000, to consider approving the Garcia River TMDL and Implementation Plan (<http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/agendas/2000/september/0906-wrk.htm>). An update will be provided to the Regional Board at the September 22, 2000, meeting in Arcata, California.

(On September 6, the State Board put the above item on its consent calendar for its September 21 Board meeting.)

The US EPA made available the draft TMDL's for Sediment and Temperature in the **Navarro River** Watershed. There will be a public meeting held on October 3, 2000. The comment period will close on October 16, 2000, and EPA will establish the TMDLs on or before December 31, 2000.

CLEANUP DIVISION

Update on Former Remco Hydraulics Site (Willits Environmental Remediation Trust)

(staff contact: Luis Rivera)

The Willits Environmental Remediation Trust (Trust), which oversees investigation and cleanup at the former Remco Hydraulics site, has received the waste

discharge requirements issued by the Regional Water Quality Control Board in July, and the Trust is refining the monitoring plan to address the concerns identified at the Board meeting. Comments on the revised draft monitoring program are due September 7, and a final monitoring program will be issued by the Executive Officer on September 8. A preparedness drill will be conducted on September 18, 2000, with the Little Lake Fire Department, Mendocino County Air Pollution Control District, Regional Water Board staff, and consultants to the Trust. The drill will ensure all parties are prepared to respond to complaints; that the responding parties are familiar with the operation of the alarm for the fixed hydrogen sulfide monitoring system, and



to implement any engineering controls identified in the air monitoring and groundwater monitoring plan. The pilot study will start on September 20, 2000, and the injection will be completed in four working days. The Executive Officer will review results after the first injection and prior to concurring with the remainder of the pilot test. Air monitoring of hydrogen sulfide levels using a hand held device as well as fixed station devices tied into the Willits emergency response center will occur. Groundwater monitoring during the 24-hour first phase of the test is planned, as well as ongoing air and groundwater monitoring throughout the entire testing period and beyond.

In a related matter, Whitman Corporation, one of the responsible parties for the contamination at the former Remco site, has issued a newsletter to the community and established a public information center in Willits to facilitate communication with the public.

New Groundwater Contamination Incident in Santa Rosa

(staff contact: Susan Warner)

Several years ago staff became aware of a possible groundwater contamination plume commingling with a large contamination case in central Santa Rosa. Staff conducted some preliminary research, and determined that water supply wells in the area could be threatened by a here-to-fore unknown groundwater contamination case. Staff requested and received this summer SWRCB emergency cleanup and abatement funds to allow sampling of domestic water supply wells within a county "island" surrounded by the City of Santa Rosa and located near the intersection of West College Avenue and Clover Drive. Samples were collected in late August. Levels of tetrachloroethylene (PCE) were reported in many drinking water wells in excess of the Maximum Contaminant level (MCL) for protection of public health. The MCL is 5 ug/l (parts per billion or ppb), and levels were found up to 330 ppb in some wells. Staff has notified the residents and the Sonoma County Environmental Health Department of these findings. No water main exists in this area to supply community water, and staff is advising affected residents to use alternative drinking water supplies.

Staff is also researching historical records to locate the source of the contamination. Likely sources include former or existing dry cleaners, as PCE is commonly used in the dry cleaning industry. Resources to investigate this and similar cases are very limited, as staff receives only 0.7 of a position each fiscal year for similar incidents across the entire region.

TIMBER HARVEST DIVISION

Update on THP-1-00-138-MEN, Ten Mile River Watershed, Related to the Request for Head of Agency Appeal

(staff contact: Frank Reichmuth)

The designated representative of the Director of the California Department of Forestry (CDF) rejected the review team recommendations, including those made by Regional Water Board staff, in approving THP-100-138-MEN. Subsequent to this approval, the Regional Water Board Executive Officer requested the State Water Resources Control Board consider at Head of Agency Appeal to CDF on this plan. Following a meeting with involved agencies, Hawthorne Timber Company accepted Regional Water Board staff recommendations on the plan, and commenced harvesting. As of this date, there have been no

violations issued by CDF to the company related to water quality issues, although a violation was issued for harvesting outside of the approved logging area. Staff has not yet re-inspected the harvest area, but expects to re-inspect at a later date.

ADMINISTRATIVE CIVIL LIABILITY COMPLAINTS

- The first Complaint to assess mandatory minimum penalties under the 1999 revisions to the California Water Code in the North Coast region was issued to the City of Santa Rosa on September 5, 2000. In 1999, the Legislature passed and Governor Davis signed SB 709, which went into effect January 1, 2000. This act is entitled the Clean Water Enforcement and Pollution Prevention Act of 1999, and has a significant effect on NPDES permittees because it requires the Regional Water Quality Control Boards or the State Water Resources Control Board to impose mandatory minimum penalties for certain violations. The Complaint issued to the City of Santa Rosa concerned effluent violations at the Laguna SubRegional Wastewater Treatment, Reuse, and Disposal facilities. The violations occurred between January 1, 2000, and June 30, 2000, and the complaint was issued by the Executive Officer for \$21,000.
- The Executive Officer issued a Complaint on September 1, 2000, in the amount of \$50,000 to Kernit and Susan Rankin regarding failure to submit an adequate erosion control plan for a hillside vineyard construction project. The Complaint proposes forgiveness of \$25,000 contingent on submittal of a complete erosion control plan by September 22, 2000, and implementation of adequate erosion control work before October 15, 2000.

CLEANUP AND ABATEMENT ORDERS

There was a Recision of Cleanup and Abatement Order No. R1-2000-56 issued on August 17, 2000, in the *Matter of the Shiloh Group, et al.* There were no cleanup and abatement orders issued between August 1 and September 1, 2000.

13267 LETTER ORDERS

Between August 1 and September 1, 2000, the Executive Officer issued eight letter Orders pursuant to section 13267 of the California Water Code. Examples of the types of Orders include:

- (1) On August 8, 2000, a 13267 letter Order issued to the Sonoma County Water Agency to require a technical report relating to the discharge of chlorinated water into Colgan Creek, Southeast Santa Rosa, on May 10, 2000, during the flushing of a new drinking water pipeline being installed by Mountain Cascade, Inc.; and
- (2) A September 1, 2000, letter order sent to International Paper and Roseburg Forest Products requesting a plan for immediate abatement of discharges of pentachlorophenol and dioxin impurities to tributaries of Boles Creek, Weed, Siskiyou county. Dioxins and furans were also detected in tissue of trout collected from Boles Creek. The Section 13267 Order requires submittal of a workplan by September 29 to eliminate the discharge to surface water.

401 CERTIFICATIONS

Applicants for federal permits that involve dredge or fill activities in surface waters (including wetlands) are required to obtain certification from the state verifying that the activity will comply with state quality standards. Most of these federal permits are referred to as 404 permits (in reference to Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act). Applicants for some other types of federal license or permits that authorize activities may result in discharges to waters of the United States are also required to obtain state certification. This state certification is called 401 Certification (in reference Section 401 of the Clean Water Act).

Between August 1 and September 1, 2000, the Executive Officer issued eight certifications under section 401 of the federal Clean Water Act. An example is a proposed certification for Dutton Meadows, where sixty-seven single-family residential homes are proposed to be built on a 5.80 acre property in Santa Rosa. The project proponent proposes to mitigate affected wetlands with an offsite mitigation project. Staff noticed this proposed mitigation on the Regional Board web site <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb1/notice404.html> and in the public review area of our offices.

SPILLS, COMPLAINTS AND INSPECTIONS

On August 21, 2000, sewage overflowed a manhole and ran down to river bar adjacent to Eel River in Rio Dell. It is estimated that there was approximately 5,000 gallons of untreated sewage spilled. The spill soaked into the gravel but there was no direct surface discharge to the river. The Humboldt County Health Department posted the beach to warn the public to avoid contact with the river.

In addition to the above spill, the staff received notification of four other spills during the month of August.

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

SolFest 2000. The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board staff participated in the SolFest 2000, the Solar and Good Living Festival, which was held on Saturday August 26, 2000, and Sunday August 27th at Real Goods Solar Living Center, 13771 South Highway 101,

Hopland, California. The facility is dedicated to demonstrating renewable energy and sustainable lifestyle technologies. This was a unique

opportunity for organizations to present products and services to a highly targeted audience. Staff provided information on a variety of water quality protection programs at the Regional Board booth, and answered questions from the public.



Erosion Prevention and Sediment Control Workshops.

The Regional Board staff is holding several one-day Erosion Prevention and Sediment Control Workshops during the first two weeks in September. Destination cities are Santa Rosa, Ukiah, Eureka, and Trinity County. These training workshops will describe the provisions of the NPDES Construction Storm Water Permit, 401 Certification, and other regulations which may apply to construction sites. The workshop will also delve into the proper planning and installation of Best Management Practices (BMPs), Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPP) preparation, and how to read and use blueprints so as to develop an effective SWPP. BMPs will also be on display.

WORKSHOPS

Regional Water Board staff presented a workshop on August 24, 2000, in Santa Rosa, that discussed the following issues: (1) what effects can gravel mining have on water quality and beneficial uses; (2) what are the impacts, potential and existing, of gravel mining in Region 1; (3) how is gravel regulated by local, state, and federal agencies; and, (4) what role should the regional board have in the regulation of gravel mining.

SPEECHES/PANELS

Staff to the Regional Water Board served on a three-person panel for a telephone call-in show on KMUD radio in Redway discussing diesel fuel releases from aboveground tanks in Southern Humboldt Co. Staff from the Department of Fish and Game and the Humboldt County Environmental Health Department also participated. The staff explained the aboveground tank regulatory requirements and the impacts from improperly contained diesel. The show aired on August 30, from 7:05 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

PUBLIC FILE REVIEW

From August 1 through September 1, 2000, there were four written requests for review of the Regional Water Board's records. These files were made available pursuant to the California Public Records Act. In addition, there were a total of 39 people who came into the offices and requested file review.

STAFF HIRING

The North Coast Regional Office currently has the following vacancies: one Environmental Program Manager I; one Associate Engineer; five WRCEs; one SWRCE; one Environmental Specialist IV; one Associate Engineering Geologist; one Secretary; and one Office Assistant.

CUSTOMER SURVEYS

There were five customer survey forms received during the month of August.